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Act Now to Receive Early Head Start Grants through Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Local private and public organizations have just 34 days remaining to apply for more than \$7 million in grants for expanding Early Head Start programs. This funding has been made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The deadline for applications is July 9.

"Early Head Start programs give children the foundation they need to achieve their highest ambitions in school and in life," Department of Children and Families Secretary Reggie Bicha said. "I encourage organizations to apply for these federal dollars as soon as possible. This investment is critical to Wisconsin's youngest children today, and it will strengthen our state tomorrow as the children become prosperous adults."

The ARRA funding will be competitively awarded to local private and public organizations, including Early Head Start and Head Start agencies. County, tribal and local governments, as well as school districts, for-profit, non-profit and faith-based agencies are also eligible to apply for the federal dollars.

The Early Head Start grants will enable agencies to provide child care and developmental resources for more toddlers and infants across Wisconsin. The funding will also allow agencies to hire more teachers, fill new staff positions and support pregnant mothers who are not in a Head Start or Early Head Start program.

Early Head Start was established in 1995 for children from birth to three years of age and pregnant women after it became widely recognized that a child's earliest years are extremely important to healthy development. Early Head Start promotes healthy prenatal outcomes, enhances the development of infants and toddlers and improves healthy family functioning.

The Department of Children and Families works with Early Head Start programs as a part of its mission to protect children, strengthen families and build communities.

DCF is partnering with the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) to provide technical support for organizations interested in applying for Early Head Start funding. For more information, please visit the WECA website at www.wisconsinearlychildhood.org.

Instructions and materials on applying for grants are also available on the Department of Health and Human Services' website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2009-ACF-OHS-SA-0087.html>.

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